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ABSTRACT

Noting that research has shown that the more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement, this Digest discusses standards for parent/family involvement and describes online resources that can help parents and educators attain those standards. It discusses existing national standards for family involvement programs and studies on parent involvement. The Digest then presents 5 goals for parent involvement ventures and describes a total of 10 online resources related to the 5 goals. (RS)

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ERIC Digest

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Online Resources for Parent/Family Involvement

by Karen Yeok-Hwa Ngeow

Research has shown with certainty that the more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Olmstead & Rubin, 1982). Studies on parent involvement also indicate that the most accurate predictor of a child's achievement in school is the extent to which the child's family is able to (i) create an environment that encourages learning, (ii) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers, and (iii) become involved in their children's education at school and within the community.

Standards for Parent/Family Involvement

The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs are guidelines to strengthen parent and family involvement in schools and in the community. The six National Standards are focused on issues of promoting effective communication and participation in school-home-community partnerships, and supporting parenting skills.

Studies on parent involvement initiatives have identified several other issues crucial to student success. First, the more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level - in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers - the better for student achievement (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). Second, although most parents do not know how to help their children with their education, with guidance and support, they may become increasingly involved in home learning activities and find themselves with opportunities to teach, to be models for and to guide their children (Roberts, 1992). Finally, parents who are aware of diversity issues and knowledgeable about school social environments can contribute greatly to their children's social and academic growth (Griffith, 1997).

Online Resources

The Internet is becoming rapidly a primary source from which families can gain access to an excellent array of home learning materials. The information available on the web spans a wide range of topics: safe use of the Internet, homework help, parent-children activities, and research findings or publications on parent and family involvement.

Goals and Resources

Based on reviews of the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement and of the literature on parent-school involvement studies, we have identified five goals for parent involvement ventures. Below is a brief discussion of the goals, followed by a description of the online resources that can help parents and educators attain them.

1. To engage parents in technology practices that benefit their children, their families, and their communities

Parents with technology know-how are more likely to develop innovative ways to facilitate their children's learning and to connect with teachers and communities.

Parents' Guide to the Internet
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/internet/index.html

The Parents' Guide to the Internet is intended to help parents - regardless of their level of technological know-how - effectively employ online resources in their children's education. The guide provides parents with an introduction to the Internet, instructions on how to navigate it, a glossary of common Internet terminology, and suggestions on how parents can allow their children to tap into the wonders of the Internet while safeguarding them from its potential hazards.

The Children's Partnership: Children and Technology
http://www.childrenspartnership.org/bbar/ctech.html

The cornerstone of this site's parent involvement program is the publication "The Parents' Guide to the Information Superhighway: Rules and Tools for Families Online." Other information includes an article on "Connecting Community Organizing with a Children's Agenda." Excerpts of the Parents' Guide have been translated into Spanish and German.

2. To promote meaningful school-parent exchanges

Successful parent involvement programs use a variety of communication tools to facilitate meaningful exchanges, for example, creating resources that contain instructional tips for parents and activities for children to learn at home.

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The Reading Village
http://teams.lacoe.edu/village/welcome.html
The Reading Village provides resources and information on the latest research, standards, conferences, children's books, professional books, and classroom resources. Of particular interest is its Special Needs section, updated successful programs and practices, and a list of software titles highly rated by educators for reading and language arts instruction.

The National Parent Information Network
http://npin.org/
The National Parent Information Network (NPIN) is an Internet-based project sponsored by ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), and administered by the Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education and the Clearinghouse on Urban Education. Its many services include a question and answer service called Parents AskERIC, full texts of parenting related materials, a Parenting-L discussion list, resources for urban and minority families, and a bi-monthly magazine.

3. To raise awareness regarding the components of effective programs and family involvement research
Parents need to be knowledgeable about successful parent involvement practices.

Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/
This site contains in-depth profiles of 10 parent involvement programs in the country and describes why and how each program developed its own particular strategies and activities. These 10 local programs were selected to highlight differing approaches to building successful school-family partnerships.

Parent Involvement: Literature Review and Database of Promising Practices
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pidata/pi0over.htm
This is a resource provided by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL). Parents can access a synthesis of research on parent involvement and a database of promising parent involvement programs. Also available are guidelines named The Keys to Success and contacts for exemplary parent involvement programs.

Kids Can Learn
http://www.kidscanlearn.com
The Kids Can Learn site is produced by the Family Learning Association whose mission is to develop information services and materials for families who want to promote the academic success of their children. They encourage the development of attitudes and academic skills that gradually lead learners to know how to set goals, find information, and use their analytical skills to become lifelong learners. The site provides in-depth research on issues important to parents, links to information on the Internet, and access to resources for supplementing children's education.

4. To promote an understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity in school-family partnerships
Parents should prepare their children for meaningful learning experiences in culturally and linguistically diverse settings.

Cultural Diversity and Early Education
http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/earlyed/
This is a workshop report by the National Research Council. The report addresses three issues: the roles culture plays in shaping children's earliest learning experiences at home; how children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect what they bring to school; and how instruction must vary to ensure learning and motivation for children from differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Dealing With Tough Issues Series: QuickTips® for Parents
http://www.par-inst.com/products/quicktips/qtindex.html
QuickTips®, from The Parent Institute, offers parent guidance in both English and Spanish. Topics include Dealing with Substance Abuse, Dealing with Student Stress, and Dealing with Tough Issues such as popularity, friendship problems, and suicide prevention.

5. To encourage contributions to and collaborative efforts within the community

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
http://pfie.ed.gov/
The U.S. Department of Education's role in the Partnership is to provide a network of support for the companies and organizations around the country working to make education a community affair. The site introduces the concept of four Partnership sectors: Family-School, Community Organizations, Religious Groups, and Employers for Learning. Also included are A Four-Stage Plan for Action to Begin an Active Business-Education Partnership and a current listing of organizations involved in the Partnership.

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